

Lewisburg Named Among Top Zoom Towns by Forbes

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The COVID-19 pandemic is propelling many remote workers to flee crowded cities in search of more bucolic settings. Some of these destinations were, in fact, once considered vacation getaways. NPR's <https://www.npr.org/sections/money/2020/09/08/909680016/zoom-towns-and-the-new-housing-market-for-the-2-americas> *Planet Money* defines "zoom towns" as *housing markets that are booming as remote work takes off*—adding another term to our growing pandemic lexicon.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, many workers opted to live in urban centers close to—or within commuting distance—of their offices and looked forward to vacations. Now, they find themselves living and working in high-rent and sometimes high-rise apartments with only limited space, with vastly diminished opportunities to travel for work or leisure. Because of social distancing measures and closures (including restaurants, theaters, nightlife and cultural institutions), they are less able to take advantage of many of the perks that initially drew them to their once-vibrant communities.

Remote workers are craving more space, privacy and tranquility as well as convenient opportunities to spend time outdoors and get closer to nature. Although interest in zoom towns has been primarily fueled by millennials, the desire to move is also being felt acutely by families living in close quarters whose children are now learning remotely at home.

Finding a place to call home

Recent trends in the real estate market reflect this shift: Rental vacancies are surging and rental costs are declining in urban areas—as housing prices are increasing and inventory is becoming more scarce in suburbs and rural areas.

Online real estate market <http://zillow.mediaroom.com/2020-09-08-Remote-Work-Could-Open-Homeownership-to-Nearly-Two-Million-Renter-Households> estimates that some two million renter households may now be in the market for home ownership because they are able to telecommute.

Based on media reports and/or out-of-town search traffic and home growth provided by Zillow, the seven towns below exemplify those that have been coined zoom towns:

Kingston, New York

Located in Ulster County about 90 miles north of Manhattan, <https://kingston-ny.gov/Tourism>" aria-label="Kingston, New York" style="box-sizing: border-box; color: rgb(0, 56, 145); cursor: pointer; background-color: transparent;">Kingston, New York topped the list in out-of town interest on Zillow, showing a traffic growth of 116% in July alone. The city offers the lure of a trendy, revitalized historic district; vibrant arts community; easy access to local parks, and opportunities for fishing, bicycling, rock-climbing, skiing and snowboarding.

Lewisburg, Tennessee

Set on rolling hills, <https://www.tnvacation.com/middle-tennessee/lewisburg>" aria-label="Lewisburg, Tennessee" style="box-sizing: border-box; color: rgb(0, 56, 145); cursor: pointer; background-color: transparent;">Lewisburg, Tennessee is an historic, small town with a population of less than 12,000 people. Located between the larger cities of Nashville and Huntsville, both about one hour away by car, it offers remote workers the best of both worlds (small town and larger cities). Housing is affordable and the wildlife-rich Duck River offers opportunities for fishing, canoeing and kayaking.

Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts

An article in the <https://vineyardgazette.com/news/2020/08/20/fueled-pandemic-vineyard-real-estate-market-sees-new-kind-boom>" aria-label="Vineyard Gazette" style="box-sizing: border-box; color: rgb(0, 56, 145); cursor: pointer; background-color: transparent;">>
<https://vineyardgazette.com/news/2020/08/20/fueled-pandemic-vineyard-real-estate-market-sees-new-kind-boom>" style="box-sizing: border-box; color: rgb(0, 56, 145); cursor: pointer; background-color: transparent;">>Vineyard Gazette notes that buyers are viewing scenic <https://web.mvny.com/tourist-information>" aria-label="Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts" style="box-sizing: border-box; color: rgb(0, 56, 145); cursor: pointer; background-color: transparent;">>Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts as a pandemic safe haven, of sorts. Only accessibly by air or boat, people who once owned second homes or spent summers here are now making the Vineyard their full-time residence. Divided into six intimate towns, this picture-perfect island offers beaches, boating and wildlife sanctuaries

Butte, Montana

The <https://montanafreepress.org/2020/06/23/realtors-report-out-of-state-rush-on-montana-real-estate/>" aria-label="Montana Free Press" style="box-sizing: border-box; color: rgb(0, 56, 145); cursor: pointer; background-color: transparent;">>
<https://montanafreepress.org/2020/06/23/realtors-report-out-of-state-rush-on-montana-real-estate/>" style="box-sizing: border-box; color: rgb(0, 56, 145); cursor: pointer; background-color: transparent;">>Montana Free Press notes that <https://southwestmt.com/communities/butte.htm>" aria-label="Butte, Montana" style="box-sizing: border-box; color: rgb(0, 56, 145); cursor: pointer; background-color: transparent;">>Butte, Montana (fifth on Zillow's list) is seeing an uptick in popularity on the ground. Median prices for single family homes in Butte, the fifth largest city in Montana, have risen more than 10 percent over a year ago. Residents praise its low population density, wide open spaces and abundance of recreational opportunities. Hikers, climbers and mountaineers will find it appealing to live about four hours from Glacier National Park,.

The Hamptons, New York

<https://www.discoverlongisland.com/member/hamptons-visitors-council/> aria-label="The Hamptons, New York" style="box-sizing: border-box; color: rgb(0, 56, 145); cursor: pointer; background-color: transparent;">The Hamptons, New York is made up of a string of small towns, villages and hamlets that line the South Fork of Long Island. Located about 80 miles east of New York City, the seaside region is best known for its expansive beaches, upscale restaurants, posh shops and luxury oceanfront homes. The <https://www.easthamptonstar.com/health-business/202072/urban-exodus-drives-boom-hamptons-real-estate-market> aria-label="East Hampton Star" style="box-sizing: border-box; color: rgb(0, 56, 145); cursor: pointer; background-color: transparent;"><https://www.easthamptonstar.com/health-business/202072/urban-exodus-drives-boom-hamptons-real-estate-market> style="box-sizing: border-box;">East Hampton Star reported that after a rental surge in early spring, low mortgage rates and worries over a second wave of the pandemic in the fall, led to a surge in home purchases. To meet demand, many short-term rental properties were turned into long-term ones or put up for sale.

Aspen, Colorado

Set in the Rocky Mountains, <https://aspenchamber.org/> aria-label="Aspen, Colorado" style="box-sizing: border-box; color: rgb(0, 56, 145); cursor: pointer; background-color: transparent;">Aspen, Colorado is best known as a mecca for skiers and other year-round outdoor enthusiasts. The combination of an historic downtown, breathtaking scenery and posh resorts have made it a popular vacation destination that is now being sought out by remote workers interested a high-quality of life. According to <https://www.aspentimes.com/news/new-aspenites-have-made-school-enrollment-and-real-estate-trending-up-but-for-how-long/> aria-label="The Aspen Times" style="box-sizing: border-box; color: rgb(0, 56, 145); cursor: pointer; background-color: transparent;"><https://www.aspentimes.com/news/new-aspenites-have-made-school-enrollment-and-real-estate-trending-up-but-for-how-long/> style="box-sizing: border-box;">The Aspen Times, the recent housing surge has created a spike in fall school enrollments.

Cape Cod, Massachusetts

<https://www.capecodchamber.org/> aria-label="Cape Cod, Massachusetts" style="box-sizing: border-box; color: rgb(0, 56, 145); cursor: pointer; background-color: transparent;">Cape Cod, Massachusetts has long been a prime summer getaway, known for its quaint towns that offer boating, golfing, beaches, hiking and biking trails, arts and culture, charming shops, excellent seafood and more. Literally a cape off the coast of Massachusetts, its communities, each with its own history and traditions and culture, are divided into three sections. In an effort to explain the recent surge in real estate prices and sales, Barnstable County (Massachusetts) Register of Deeds John Meade told <https://www.barnstablepatriot.com/news/20200911/cape-cod-real-estate-experts-say-its-too-soon-to-draw-conclusions-from-sales-boom> aria-label="The Barnstable Patriot" style="box-sizing: border-box; color: rgb(0, 56, 145); cursor: pointer; background-color: transparent;"><https://www.barnstablepatriot.com/news/20200911/cape-cod-real-estate-experts-say-its-too-soon-to-draw-conclusions-from-sales-boom> style="box-sizing: border-box;">The Barnstable Patriot that strong sales may be “powered by work-from-home city dwellers relocating to the Cape.”

For those unhappy with their current living situation and seeking a truly “domestic” getaway, a visit to a “zoom town” might help pique your fancy before you make the plunge.

A few caveats to assuage your wanderlust:

Although remote workers can now <https://www.nytimes.com/article/virtual-tour-real-estate.html> visit homes virtually, a recent Zillow <https://www.zillow.com/research/online-buying-selling-27568/> survey found that a majority of buyers (64%) say they want to tour a home in person before purchasing it. “That said, not everyone feels comfortable traveling during the pandemic,” says a Zillow spokesperson.

Writing for

https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2020-09-13/should-i-buy-a-house-now-covid-19-pandemic-says-wait?utm_campaign=socialflow-organic&cmpid%3D=socialflow-twitter-view&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter&utm_content=view&__twitter_impression=true&__twitter_event=article Bloomberg, Teresa Ghilarducci, a professor of economics at the New School for Social Research cautions that a seller’s market may not be the right time for anyone to purchase a new home.